



TOWN OF JEROME

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Founded 1876
Incorporated 1899

Minutes General Plan Steering Committee Wednesday, January 13, 2016 6:00 p.m. Jerome Town Hall, 600 Clark Street

ITEM 1: Call to Order/Roll Call

Chair Doug Freund called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

Roll call was taken by Albert Sengstock, Zoning Administrator. Members present were Chair Doug Freund, Jane Moore, Margie Hardie, Natalie Barlow and Suzy Mound. Mimi Currier and Denise Guth had excused absences. Ann Gale was absent.

Staff present were Al Sengstock, Zoning Administrator and Jennifer Julian, Minute Taker.

Members of the public present were Randy Garrison, Cottonwood City Council member and Doree Christiansen, resident.

ITEM 2: Approve meeting minutes of October 28, 2015

Ms. Barlow moved to approve the minutes of October 28, 2015 as revised. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hardie. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Hardie objected to having two dates on one agenda. Mr. Sengstock will change for future meetings.

ITEM 3: Public Comment

Ms. Christiansen asked about the dates of future meetings.

ITEM 4: Review and approve changes from last session

Mr. Freund suggested eliminating the Economic Development Element because it is not required. He presented his case that the committee should not do the element, but substitute a general statement. The 1981 plan was drawn up during a crisis when the Town needed economic growth and the infrastructure was crumbling. Most of the goals of the 1981 plan have been accomplished and the Town has a very different economic situation today. He believes that we have almost no control over the nature of businesses that set up in Jerome. He would prefer to see businesses that honor the Town's history and copper mining past, but that's not what we are getting. When the Town considers renters, it gives preference to arts and crafts or something that represents the context of Jerome. In addition, diversification of business was already considered in the Land Use section. Furthermore, defending Jerome's residential areas from incursion of commercial use has also been dealt with in Land Use. The Town's hands are tied by Proposition 207. The Town cannot do any significant rezoning; annexation was rejected and de-annexation has been considered. The group has discussed at length the pros and cons of growing Jerome's economic base. Any significant growth of Jerome business is limited by topography, infrastructure, resources and the will of many of Jerome's residents to not grow beyond our means. Jerome gets vital tax revenue from economic activity, but taxation is a matter for the Town Council, not the General Plan. Mr. Freund's opinion is that the committee cannot build upon the 1981 General Plan and it doesn't need to be rewritten. He invited the committee members and attendees to convince him otherwise.

Ms. Moore agrees about not redoing the 1981 plan. She would, however, like to include a short paragraph or two in succinct language with goals and objectives.

Ms. Moore said, for example, the Town cannot have a business that uses a lot of water and there is no room for a huge hotel.

Mr. Freund suggested a statement of the Town's limitations. Ms. Moore said yes and also including diversifying the economy to sustain the Town.

Mr. Freund said that the Town is at the whim of the marketplace. Towns can attract industries through zoning but Jerome cannot do that now.

Ms. Hardie agrees largely with Ms. Moore. She invited the committee to review the ARS handout. Page 2, Item F emphasizes the general plan in zoning. Economic development isn't land use. Does the General Plan affect the Town code? ARS has more bite to it than it used to. If the Town neglects to do an Economic Development Element it could lose something in the future.

In addition, Ms. Hardie said that the town of Bisbee's economic development section of its General Plan calls for doing things that are compatible with a historic town.

Ms. Hardie also said that by 2035, tourism could be greatly different. The Town needs to start working on diversity now or it could be back where it was 30 years ago. Promoting certain types of businesses and relying on diversity and the ARS suggest to her that an Economic Development should be included.

Ms. Barlow likes the goals and objectives and thinks that the General Plan needs to include them. For example, "provide permanent employment opportunities for residents of the town."

Mr. Freund asked how could that goal be accomplished? Ms. Barlow said that the committee is not talking about accomplishing it, but just making a plan and acknowledging it as an important part.

Ms. Moore could see something coming before Planning & Zoning and a decision being made that it goes along with recommendations in the General Plan. Ms. Barlow agreed but could not provide an example.

Mr. Freund's example was the vacation rental issue. Through the initial process, individuals pointed to the general plan and the board members at the time scoffed at it, saying they hadn't followed it in years. They chose not to listen to pleas that there were statements in the General Plan dealing with vacation rentals.

Ms. Barlow felt that the goals and objectives are basic, but that she does not want to include the statistics.

Ms. Christensen supports the idea of having an Economic Development section that lines up with the other sections. Having parallels among the various sections strengthens the entire plan.

Mr. Garrison said that the Economic Development section is needed as a placeholder, to be able to point to it in the future. It is important to include that the committee had a discussion to guide future plans. He believes that

Economic Development is about the vision of what you want your community to be. It isn't necessary providing rules of how you are going to develop, but how you want to develop. He recommended editing the first two paragraphs and approved of the goals. He felt that Goal 3 was the most important because it recognizes the uniqueness of the Town. It is important to embrace change but it must be done in a way that fits with where the Town is and where it is going.

Mr. Sengstock explained that economic development is different for other communities that have open land and the ability to rezone for various uses. But that doesn't work in Jerome because of the limited land. Right now Jerome is total free enterprise, whatever is open is available and the product is none of our business. We aren't seeking to develop any kind of business through economic outreach. We don't have the luxury to have an impact on specific uses unless we seek them.

Ms. Hardie agreed with Ms. Christensen that the various portions of the General Plan need to mesh together. Parking is a land use issue and parking is also an economic issue.

Ms. Christensen appreciated the vision and urged preserving the flavor of the historic town but with the values of today. For example, encouraging arts-oriented businesses.

Ms. Moore gave the example of a grocery store with parking. One possible location, the old gas station, is zoned residential. But if the Plan said a grocery store is a good idea...

Mr. Sengstock said that type of expanded use is covered in the Land Use element. That site could be identified on the Land Use map as possible for rezoning.

Ms. Hardie said the 1981 Plan has a listing of local retail sales and services on page 59. She would like to see that in the future to improve the quality of the Town for the residents.

Ms. Moore said that you can have possible locations for rezoning in the Land Use section and also an encouragement or suggestion in the Economic Development section.

Mr. Sengstock said that the document will be visually referenced. There would be an overlay area of possible future development. Then someone could submit a commercial development plan. As part of the process, the General Plan map and the Planning & Zoning district would be amended at the same time.

Ms. Moore preferred not suggesting specific areas of expansion.

Ms. Christensen asked if there a way to regulate and prevent a big box grocery store in Town. Mr. Sengstock said that the current zoning districts do not have any properties that would support that type of use. If we want to eliminate the possibility then we don't rezone. He likes the general comments in the Plan that say we are committed to maintaining our historical texture but we will be open-minded to resident-serving businesses that make ecological sense, without committing to any particular use.

Ms. Hardie wondered what would happen if the mine company tears down the old high school and sells it to a big company. It could result in a big box store. What if residents in commercial zones sell out? She believes it would be acceptable in the Plan to say what we don't want.

Ms. Moore said that DRB has a review process for tearing down structures. Ms. Hardie said that documents are not

always enforced.

Ms. Barlow said that the Economic Development section is only a few pages. Everything that has been discussed is included in those pages. What the group has already done is positive. The analysis will be harder. But the goals and objectives cover the vision the group has been discussing.

Mr. Freund agreed with Mr. Garrison that this is an opportunity to make the vision tangible. However, he is concerned that the group is unable to have an influence over many things.

Ms. Moore suggested removing specifics and redundancies and making the document more succinct, just giving the direction the group wants to see in the future.

Mr. Sengstock agreed that the data is unnecessary. He believes that most agree there is no appetite for annexation or expanded commercial or industrial zoning, yet remain open-minded to something that would create jobs and serve the community. He would say the economic goals are open-minded but conservative and preservation-based.

Ms. Hardie asked what Mr. Sengstock meant by "open-minded." He explained that if someone showed up with a product or service that the group had not envisioned, but it is something that could fit in in Jerome, the Town will consider it and if any zoning changes need to be made. The committee is creating a document that is a guideline to respond to future requests.

Ms. Hardie said that wine tasting has become a popular business in Jerome. In the future, will the town turn into a lot of bars? Mr. Garrison said that Jerome always has been an alcohol-heavy town, but that doesn't mean you want to promote it.

Ms. Hardie wondered how to stop future liquor business as a home occupation. Ms. Moore said to keep reiterating you don't want commercial incursion into residential areas.

There was a general discussion about liquor licenses, and wine tasting as retail. Mr. Freund said that the Town has few commercial spaces and it could be limiting its appeal by having too many wine tasting rooms.

Ms. Christensen said that the limitations the committee are discussing are hoops that a new business would have to jump through. Encourage the applicant in a positive way to be responsible for meeting the Town's vision.

Mr. Sengstock explained that for retail businesses, the product is not exactly relevant to zoning and Town Code. The Town can encourage the business to be sensitive, but if the product is legal it can be sold in any retail spot in Town. Certain products could be subject to obtaining a Use Permit, which would be a legislative process.

There was general discussion about medical marijuana dispensaries as retail. Ms. Moore commented that medical marijuana dispensaries are an example of something that wasn't foreseen in the 1981 Plan. Mr. Garrison pointed out that if recreational marijuana use becomes legal in Arizona, the circumstances will change again.

Ms. Hardie wondered how the Town could give incentives to attract the kinds of businesses the Town wants. Mr. Sengstock said that is part of economic development. Ms. Barlow suggested that the Plan needs to include the types of businesses the Town wants.

Ms. Moore said that the zoning ordinance and General Plan have served the Town's economy well over the years. To have nothing in the new Plan regarding economic development is a mistake.

Ms. Hardie suggested that each committee member identify items from the 1981 Plan that are important and bring them to the next meeting.

Mr. Sengstock agreed. He added that the members should look for the specific things from the 1981 Plan that were applied in the Town that had the benefit everyone was hoping for. How could those things be expanded or continued, if they still apply? Ms. Hardie agreed with him. She would also like to include incentives to bring in new businesses that balance the existing ones.

Ms. Barlow wanted to finish discussion of the goals and objectives. Mr. Freund agreed there was a consensus to move forward.

Mr. Sengstock believes the section needs a narrative describing the Town's historic experience, commitment to principles and commitment to carrying those values forward. He will compose it for the next meeting. Mr. Freund agreed.

Ms. Hardie said her mindset has changed regarding what has already been done on the Economic Development section. She is now looking at it simplifying it more.

Ms. Moore said that some items could be combined to remove redundancies. However, Goal 3 on page 54, "Assure that preservation of Jerome's historic character is always a key component to any new business development effort," is something that has served the Town well and should be carried on into the future.

Ms. Christensen urged the committee not to lose the sense of vision going forward when considering the goals. Ms. Barlow agreed.

Mr. Freund asked about the old item 4 on page 54, "Provide service businesses which will meet the needs of the residents of Jerome." That was important in the 1981 Plan. Is it something that we want to encourage now? The new item 4, "Attract businesses which will meet the needs of Jerome's current and future residents," says the same thing but more vaguely.

Ms. Barlow felt that goal belongs in the comprehensive plan.

There was discussion about a gas station in Jerome and the possibility of a charging station for electric cars. Mr. Freund asked, with the Town's limited commercial space, do we want to fill it with basic services that can be obtained in Cottonwood?

Ms. Christensen said that local businesses need to be attractive to locals in order to survive. Ms. Mound agreed. Ms. Christensen said that Jerome shops do well at selling specialty items of high quality.

Mr. Sengstock said that, based on the Town's circumstances, it is unlikely that a business providing basic products and services, such as a market, can survive. During the high season, Jerome would not be a convenient place for

shopping since the parking is limited.

There was general discussion about parking. Mr. Freund suggested that parking and its continued regulation should be included in this section.

Ms. Hardie felt the discussion focused on the downtown business district and asked what economic development has to do with the residents. Mr. Freund said businesses that serve both tourists and residents have a better chance of success.

Mr. Freund suggested taking a fresh look at the entire Economic Development section starting from the beginning as well as going through the same section in the 1981 Plan.

Ms. Moore suggested eliminating page 56 on. There may be a few important sentences or paragraphs that can be pulled out. Mr. Sengstock agreed that pages 56-58 could be deleted, but the remaining pages may have something useful.

There was discussion about earlier plans to rezone specific areas, and the possibility of rezoning other areas of Town.

Ms. Hardie asked for clarification on the committee's homework for the next meeting. Mr. Sengstock replied that the identified pages would be eliminated. Members should go through and identify items, topics and principles that are good and should be carried forward.

Ms. Barlow asked if the group will consider the goals and objectives. Mr. Sengstock said yes. He will bring back a preface communicating the tone. Then the group will review what has already been done and could be consolidated. Pages 56 through 58 will be dropped.

Ms. Barlow asked if the group is going to keep what has been done so far. Mr. Sengstock said that his understanding is that everyone wants to relook at it all. Ms. Barlow likes what has been done so far with the goals and objectives and will think if anything is missing.

There was general discussion about regulating drones over the Town.

ITEM 5: Continue discussions regarding the Economic Development Element

Considered above.

ITEM 6: Future Agenda Items

None.

ITEM 7: ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Moore made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Barlow seconded. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Approval on next page.

Minutes
General Plan Steering Committee
Wednesday, January 13, 2016 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Julian on February 10, 2016.

Approved: _____

Chair

Date: _____

2/24/16

Attest: _____

Vice Chair

Date: _____

2-24-16